7/5/71

Mr. Joseph M. Rothstein
Administrative Assistant
Senator Mike Gravel
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Rothstein,

I cannot dismiss the strange note sent you on my birthday as necessarily without meaning, necessarily no more than a nut letter. It may have been no more than an sick indulgence of a sick mind, but in itself that does not warrant paying it no heed. I have been perplexed by the need for this ego to challenge me. Why me of all people, and is it no more than a 1 in 365 chance that the letter was mailed on my birthday?

So, when I've had a few minutes, I've been thinking of it. I have a few more suggestions to make, to add to the significance of the fictitious address of I.F. Stone, 1940 Luke St, when there is no such address in Rockville but the King James version of the bible can show "if", "stones" and a possibly relevant verse in 19:40 of the Book of Luke. In a macabre twist, the author might find satisfaction in this elliptical use of the name of an old anti-war writer to an employee of an anti-war Senator.

If you have no idea who the author might be, I suggest there might be a significance in his selecting you, in part the same kind of macabre indulgence. It is in your address, Dead Run Drive. A friend with a copy of a list of the address of all Members and their top assistants is going to check all address to see if in any he can find any other into which any such meaning can be read. If he finds anything, I'll let you know. But in a context of a possible threat to Senator McGovern, "dead run" ought not be ignored any more than sickness, especially because in all the political assassinations the official explanation is that a single sick person was responsible. This, whether or not false, as I believe in those of the President and Dr. King, might be enough to trigger sick thought.

When we spoke, I asked that you ask the Library of Congress to explore each possible phrase in a Shakespeare concordance. I repeat this request in the light of Luke and this letter.

The last line reads, "Next: Vigoro do Lilacs sheers the ears of Senator McGovern." For the moment, let us assume that "sheer" is the single error in spelling, grammer or typing and that what is really meant is "shear". If I am not correct in this, the meaning is still not entirely innocuous. "Vigoro" is perhaps the best-known brand of commercial fertilizer. The lilac is the State flower of New Hampshire, where the first primary is held. Thus there can be an obvious meaning in terms of a threat to Senator McGovern, more if one things in terms of threat when addressed to Dead Run Drive.

The opening is "The Constable from Barnstable", one of the things I'd liked checked in Shakespeare, followed by "known by mothers as magister of horse)". The current slang for "mothers" I spare the possibly tender sensibilities of the secretary who may open this

letter. In its archaic meaning, "magister" is master of the hunt. The question following is "asks:'Wasn't Lee in Irving's bedroom?'". In the context of an ego finding it necessary to challenge me in the very opening, "Can Mr. Weisberg translate?", the most obvious "Lee" is Oswald. His address and the place his wife lived and the place to which he returned weekends was Irving, Texas, the home of Ruth Paine. The night before the JFK assassination he was in a bedroom in Irving.

It has been a long time since I have read Macbeth, but as I recall it, Duncan was the king killed by Macbeth and Macbeth, in turn, was killed by Duncan's son, also named Duncan. The opening sentence, taken apart above, is signed "Duncan". This is followed by "barfly heir or Earl George Sande)". Whether Duncan, Jr., was a barfly I do not recall. The "Earl" at the moment means nothing to me and might confuse the reference to "George Sande", if this is a reference to the woman writer who used that pen-name. I think she was French and that she spelled it "Sand", but I'm not certain.

There may be meaning in what appears to be a play on "R.S.V.P", given as "R.SFP." The "R" and "P" do suggest Ruth Paine. Her maiden name is Hyde. I do not know her maiden name, but after seeing this, perhaps in a trick of the mind, I seem to think it is Sylvia. I am by no means certain and do not have time to check it now.

When I can, I'll see if any meaning can be extracted from or attributed to the rest of this thing. For even an informed man, if it is nothing but a sick exercise, it represents some trouble. Whether he was engaging in no more than an idle exercise I am not qualified to judge. However, if you consider it might be worth having some experts in the mind explore this, I suggest a friend who is one and works with some of the best, including those who have developed the standard personality reading, the MMPI test. He is Gary Richard Schoener, a clinical psychologist at Mayo Hospital. Gary also has an interest in the political assassinations and some knowledge of two of those I would consider possible candidates as author of your communication. He is familiar with the writing of one who considers himself a writer and a kind of poet. I leave this decision up to you. His address is 1080 15th Ave., S.E. Minneapolis, Minn. 55414. If you would like him and his better-known associates to study this, please send him a copy of the original communication, this correspondence and anything else you may have that might be relevant, and say it is at my suggestion. These are people who as part of their professional obligations do keep confidences.

My personal experience with the ~~limits~~ irrational is limited to the dimming past. During World War II I spent several months guarding a locked ward in a major psychiatric hospital part of which was used by the Army. If I am anything but an expert, I also cannot forget what some of these normally docile men could do without notice or warning. So, I am reluctant to do anything on my non-expert own. However, I would encourage that this not now be entirely dismissed, not without further exploration, and I would suggest that you decide whether to call my last two letters to the attention of Mr. Cunningham, Senator McGovern's AA. I believe he is reading my most recent book.

Sincerely,

cc:Tom Kelley

Harold Weisberg

P.S. 7/.. 71

Several young people with whom I work were here yesterday. Because they are intelligent and years closer to school than I, I asked them to think about this cryptic thing. We had discussed getting a French dictionary when my wife recalled that "chou" means cabbage in French. The father of one had a career in military intelligence. He has just phoned me to tell me that his father immediately recalled, without recalling the words, that there is a nursery rhyme about "The Constable from Barnstable", where the final "a" is pronounced as "ih". The father's hunch about Barnstable also proved correct. My copy of the Dell/Columbia-Viking Desk Encyclopaedia on p. 153 reads:

"Barnstable (bärn'stubul), resort town (pop.10,480, SE Mass., on Cape Cod, settled 1639. Includes Hyannis resort (pop.4235), with Massachusetts Maritime Acad., and Cotuit village, noted for oysters."

Another source consulted by this friend gives Barnstable as "resort town, county seat of Barnstable County, Mass., includes Barnstable, Hyannis and Osterville, Mass."

I was wrong on who killed who. Macbeth, who had killed Duncan, was killed by Macduff.

Perhaps adding further are these definitions from the French:

Folie - madness or foolish act.
Glebe - clod or soil.

As plain may be an idiom meaning on the level.

If we, in the light of this, reread the first sentence and do not consider "mothers" as intended in modern vernacular, a fairly clear meaning can be taken and the reference can be to Senator Edward Kennedy or, since Duncan is dead, either of the two assassinated Kennedys. That sentence, to save you time, reads, "The Constable from Barnstable (known by mothers as magister of horse) asks: 'Wasn't Lee in Irving's bedroom?'". It is also possible to infer a meaning to the concluding question, and, especially with the inclusion of "mothers", to a special kind of hunt, a particular "magister", even a special pun in the use of "horse".

The more of these kinds of meanings that can be inferred, whether or not intended, the less inclined I am to dismiss this thing and, if anything, the more possible significa there can be if the Secret Service's conclusion of nuttiness is warranted.

The present Senator Kennedy has divorced himself from any interest in any aspect of any assassination, so far as I know. His AA, David Burke, told me when I wanted him to be aware of certain facts I considered it to his interest to know that the Senator regarded all the members of the Commission as honorable men. I live where Roger Brooke Taney did. In his day he also was regarded as honorable. Others are memorialized by Shakespeare. So, it seems to be pointless for me to attempt to communicate this indefinite thing that may or ma not be important to him. I hope that others to whom he might speak and listen may think som one should be informed.

If it is not too much trouble for you to consult the Library of Congress on "The Constable from Barnstable", I'd appreciate its words and any other information they might be able to supply. None of the foregoing is in any way inconsistent with the man I immediat thought might be capable of composing this. To the best of my knowledge, the Secret Service did no more than interview him once, in New Orleans. I do not have the results of that inte view or I have forgotten it. But I have a fairly extensive file of my own.

Sincerely,

P.S.2 7/5/71

I have just had a phone call from the friend who was going to check names and addresses for the Congress. His list is of the Senate side only. There is no name, of any member of staff, with anything like the possible connotation of your address, "Dead Run Drive".

If one takes the parenthesis of the second sentence and is willing to stretch things a bit, as one resorting to such ellipsis might, just about everything in it after "Ball & Chain" can be given a nautical suggestion. There is, for example, a chip log, something thrown over the side of a boat.

With the capitalization, ball and chain might be a reference to someone's wife.

Sincerely,

cc: Tom Kelley Harold Weisberg

I suggest that if the basis of selection was your address, someone went to much trouble or there is as remarkable a coincidence as in the mailing on my birthday of a thing beginning with my name.

In Mac Bird J F K is Kin O'Dunc

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